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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 KUALA LUMPUR 001977

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [ASEC](#) [MY](#)
SUBJECT: MALAYSIA RELEASES 11 DETAINEES WITH PAST TERRORIST
LINKS

Classified By: DCM David B. Shear for reasons 1.4 (b, c, d).

Summary

¶1. (S/NF) Malaysia unexpectedly released 11 people, originally held for terrorist links, from ISA (Internal Security Act) detention on October 18. The eleven represent Malaysian citizens previously tied to the Malaysia Militant Group (KMM) or the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) terrorist group. Local media attention has focused on the release of Nik Adli bin Nik Aziz, son of the Pan-Malaysia Islamic Party (PAS) leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat. Others, however, had more significant ties to terrorist groups or a known history of terrorist activity. These include retired army Lt. Col. Abdul Manaf Kasmuri, who has been linked to the 2002 Bali bombing and Indonesian terrorist Hambali. We recommend that the USG express concern to the GOM regarding the sudden release of the terrorist suspects, but that we do so initially through intelligence channels. End Summary.

Home for the Holidays

¶2. (U) In a move timed to coincide with the Aidul Fitri holiday season, Malaysia released from prison eleven people originally detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for suspected terrorist-related activities. Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi, who is also Minister for Internal Security, signed the release order. Malaysia had detained the eleven men under the ISA, a 1960s era law passed to combat communist insurgents, for the past three to five years for their suspected involvement in the Malaysia Militant Group (Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia, or KMM) and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) terrorist groups. Police have imposed restricted movement conditions on the former detainees, and have required them to report weekly to local police. The police did not provide the public with advance notification of these releases.

¶3. (U) The names of the released ISA detainees are as follows:

KMM associated detainees:

Nik Adli Nik Aziz
Zainon Ismail
Ahmad Tauzi Tarman
Md Lotfi Arifin
Zid Saharani Mohamad Isa
Mohd Rafi Udin

JI associated detainees:

Abdul Samad bin Shukri Mohamad

Mazlan Ishak
Syed Ali Syed Abdullah
Alias Sani
Abdul Manaf Kasmuri

Media Focus on Politician's Son

¶4. (SBU) The six suspected KMM members represent the last affiliated with that group to be released. All of the KMM members had been held since 2001 for the group's suspected participation in bombings, bank robberies and murder. The alleged leader of KMM was Nik Adli bin Nik Aziz who had fought and trained in Afghanistan. Nik Adli's father, Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, is the Chief Minister of Kelantan, a state in the northeast of peninsular Malaysia, as well as the spiritual leader of PAS, Malaysia's main Islamic opposition party. Media outlets have focused most of their attention on the release of Nik Adli, whose arrest some viewed as politically motivated because of the rivalry between the ruling National Coalition government and PAS. Nik Adli's politician father expressed deep bitterness toward the government for holding his son and told reporters he would never thank the police for his son's release.

Others of More Concern

¶5. (S/NF) Other released terrorist suspects appear to have more serious and substantial links to terrorism, including JI member Abdul Manaf Kasmuri. Manaf, a retired Malaysian army lieutenant colonel, has been linked to the 2002 Bali bombing, to Indonesian terrorist Hambali and to major figures within Al-Qaeda, and reportedly has abetted planning of terrorist acts in the United States. He is known to have assisted

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Muslim fighters in Bosnia where he led a peacekeeping contingent. Former detainee Alias Sani also has ties to Hambali and is known to have provided material assistance to fighters en route to the Philippines.

Comment

¶6. (S/NF) Malaysian authorities did not provide any Mission office with advance notification of these releases. We are examining what, if any, near-term security implications there may be to the release of the 11 men in Malaysia. The sudden release of suspects with past substantial links to terrorist acts and organizations is disturbing. We recommend that the USG express concern to Malaysia about these releases, but that we do so initially through intelligence channels.
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